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Interdisciplinary student team produces video for the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment

Summary: Morris is one of only six campuses in the nation chosen for the project.

(September 15, 2009)-What's harder than trying to showcase the University of Minnesota, Morris's multitude of green projects in five minutes? How about creating a [five-minute video](#) on campus projects in less than a month? That's the challenge five students accepted. The culmination of their month-long artistic struggle—a well-composed, condensed walk-through of the campus plan to be carbon neutral in 2010—illustrates just how beautifully they accomplished a difficult but rewarding task.

Chosen by ACUPCC and Apple, Inc.

Morris was one of six colleges chosen to produce a video for the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC). The project was co-sponsored by Apple, Inc., a Gold level sponsor of the ACUPCC. The video will be used to encourage other colleges to join the higher education movement to reduce carbon emissions and reverse global climate change. Jacqueline Johnson, chancellor, is an ACUPCC charter signatory and member of the governing body steering committee. Campuses that sign the commitment develop short- and long-term plans to achieve carbon neutrality.

Interdisciplinary student producers

The interdisciplinary team that produced the video includes Evan Gragg '09, Chanhassen, studio art Tara Greiman '11, Dayton, environmental studies and psychology Sam Krump-Johnson '11, Maple Grove, theatre arts and communications, media, and rhetoric Matt Privratsky '11, Walker, political science with a communications, media, and rhetoric minor and Luke Toso '11, Falcon Heights, environmental science and biology. Greiman, Toso, and Privratsky coordinated the planning and writing of the script. Gragg and Krump-Johnson handled the filming and editing.

Project highlights green initiatives

While it's hard not to miss the defining wind turbine gently rotating on the ridge beyond campus, the students report that creating the video helped them discover more details about less visible green initiatives on campus and in the community.

Says Privratsky: "I hadn't known a lot about Stevens Forward! or the local foods program, and they are both huge movements that will be changing our region in the immediate and long-term future. Our [campus] goal for 50 percent local foods by 2013 was probably the greatest and most intriguing piece of information I picked up."

In addition to learning about Stevens FORWARD!, a county effort to identify a shared vision for the future, and the Pride of the Prairie local foods program, the group also delved into the who, what, where, when, and why details behind green initiatives on campus.

Community and campus voices in the video

Voices in the video note Morris's connection to the creation of green jobs and an emerging green economy, including an approximate \$500,000 that will be injected into the region through the purchase of agricultural by-products for the biomass gasification system. In layperson's terms, the gasification system is explained, and the benefits of wind energy—on a very windy prairie—are discussed. Student involvement is praised and green renovation of the Community Services building highlighted.

And, in the words of Peter Wyckoff, associate professor of biology, excitement is conveyed as 2010 approaches and the campus is on track to become the first higher education institution in the nation to be “truly fossil fuel carbon neutral” through on-campus efforts.

The film also includes comments by Troy Goodnough, campus sustainability coordinator, Abdullah Jaradat, United States Department of Agriculture North Central Soil Conservation Research Laboratory research leader, Lowell Rasmussen, vice chancellor for finance and facilities, Sandy Olson Loy, vice chancellor for student affairs, Dave Aronson, Community Services renovation project manager, and student Jenna Sandoe '10, Rochester.

The video has been featured on the ACUPCC iTunesU channel, distributed to existing and prospective ACUPCC signatories, and shared through the Higher Education Associations Sustainability Consortium. [View the video produced for the ACUPCC.](#)

Photo by Kurt Schliep '10, Howard Lake, from left: Sam Krump-Johnson '11, Matt Privratsky '11, Tara Greiman '11, and Evan Gragg '09 tape an on-site interview with Dave Aronson, project manager, in the Community Services building currently undergoing renovation to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum specifications.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.